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EXECUTIVE BOARD

Winter organizational session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1st MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 9 February 1993, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. WARD (Canada)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIRMAN

1. The CHAIRMAN said that during the previous month, he had visited UNICEF-assisted programmes in India and China, where small contributions by UNICEF in time and money had been multiplied several fold as Governments contributed resources to programmes in areas such as health, education, and water and sanitation. The programmes in both countries were highly decentralized and their success depended on sound management at the State, provincial, and especially the township level. While, historically, programmes had focused on the areas of health and water and sanitation, the emphasis was currently shifting to that of primary education. The success of those programmes, however, depended on whether supplementary funding could be obtained.

2. He wished to draw attention to a common perception that most of the resources budgeted were for programmes spent on service delivery. A closer look, however, revealed that there had been a substantial shift of resources into capacity-building and advocacy. That shift demonstrated that UNICEF, like many other organizations, was dynamic and subject to constant change. The members of the Executive Board thus had an important role to play in shaping the direction of that change.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (E/ICEF/1993/L.1)

3. The CHAIRMAN said that an additional item, "Election of a Bureau member", should be added to the provisional agenda.

4. The provisional agenda, as orally revised, was adopted.

ELECTION OF A BUREAU MEMBER

5. The CHAIRMAN said that on account of the recent separation of the former Czechoslovakia into the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic, Czechoslovakia had ceased to be a member of the Executive Board. Consequently, Mr. Vaclav Vacek, the Second Vice-Chairman, was no longer a member of the Bureau. The Czech Republic had recently been elected to the Executive Board by the Economic and Social Council, and the Group of Central and Eastern European States had advised the secretariat that Mr. Vacek would be the candidate for the post of Second Vice-Chairman. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Board wished to re-elect Mr. Vacek.

6. It was so decided.

7. The CHAIRMAN said that the Vice-Chairman of the Programme Committee, Mr. Syed Mohsin Ali of Pakistan, had been assigned other duties by his Government and was thus no longer able to serve as Vice-Chairman. He had asked the Group of Asian States to choose a replacement as soon as possible.

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If the election could not take place at the current session, the Board should conduct a mail poll so that the new Vice-Chairman could attend the meeting of the Bureau prior to the Board's April session. The alternative would be to hold the election on the first day of that session, but in that case the new Vice-Chairman would be unable to attend the Bureau's April meeting. The Group of Asian States should keep the Board informed of its progress in the selection of a new nominee so that the secretariat could be advised by the end of the current session whether a mail poll would be required.

OVERVIEW OF KEY DEVELOPMENTS BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

8. Mr. GRANT (Executive Director), reviewing key developments since the previous session of the Board, in June 1992, said that the global political climate had been marked by both peril and promise. In the category of perils, emergency situations had grown much more extensively and intensively than expected. At its June session, the Board had hoped that the situation in Yugoslavia would be resolved, and that the truce which had been negotiated in Somalia would have stabilized the political situation in that country. In addition, it had hoped that there would be further progress in the situation in Iraq, and that, in view of the political transition that had already taken place in Kabul, the conflict in Afghanistan would be resolved. It was clear, however, that none of the above scenarios had materialized, and that, on the contrary, there had been an alarming breakdown in order, which had affected large civilian populations. The situation in southern Somalia, for example, was unprecedented in recent times, while the problems of newly independent States were moving into an even more difficult stage.

9. At the same time, it was becoming increasingly clear that the international community expected the United Nations to take action in those situations even at the risk of the safety of United Nations staff. During 1992, for example, a larger number of UNICEF staff had been killed than the combined total for the previous several years. It would appear that the international community expected United Nations staff to function in situations where law and order did not exist. The international community, however, was itself showing a greater willingness to respond to emergency situations. The Security Council, for example, had taken action time and again in conflict situations, and had authorized a number of large-scale peace-keeping operations. The willingness of the international community to invest in such operations had been most strikingly manifested in its massive intervention in Somalia, on the basis of the right to food.

10. The current global political climate placed major responsibilities on the United Nations system and on UNICEF at a time when the continuing recession in the industrialized countries was having an impact on the funding of the activities of agencies dependent on voluntary contributions. Two Nordic countries, which were major contributors to United Nations agencies, had reduced their contributions for 1993 and beyond. One of those, Finland, had reduced its official development assistance (ODA) from 0.7 per cent to 0.4 per cent, and was proposing to cut its contribution to agencies, including

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UNICEF, by 75 per cent. The reduction in the level of Swedish ODA, coupled with the devaluation of the Swedish krona, had had a severe impact on the overall level of contributions.

11. During the period under review, no progress had been made on the question of the debt of sub-Saharan African countries. Progress on that issue was essential to any meaningful effort to help those African countries overcome their current problems, since their debt burden was proportionately three times heavier than that of Latin America.

12. On the other hand, a welcome development had been the change in the ethos of the international community, which had led it to intervene massively on humanitarian grounds in Somalia. That attitude stood in stark contrast to the attitude of the British in Calcutta, India, where 1.5 million people had starved to death in early 1944, although the storehouses for grain in that city had been full. The British Government of the day had felt no obligation to provide for those who could not afford to pay for food.

13. Since the Board's session in June 1992, the shift in that ethos had been gaining momentum. One hundred and twenty-nine countries had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, while a further 30 countries had signalled their intention to do so. Furthermore, regional consultations at the ministerial level had been held in most regions of the world on how to work together on the follow-up to national plans of action. One of the major conclusions of those consultations was that national programmes needed to be refined in order to make them more compatible with national budgetary realities. Also, greater responsibility should be devolved to State and municipal authorities, and intermediate goals should be set to serve as benchmarks for the achievement of the goals to the year 2000. The developed countries which had participated in the regional consultations held at Dakar, Senegal, had issued a promising statement on the importance of increased external sources of funding to enable the goals of the World Summit for Children to be achieved, either through increased ODA or through the restructuring of the current ODA in order to place greater emphasis on meeting essential human needs. They had also recognized the need for meaningful action on the problem of African debt, since the resources thus released could be earmarked for meeting the needs of women, children and the environment.

14. Agenda 21, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, had incorporated the goals of the World Summit for Children. In addition, the International Conference on Nutrition, convened by WHO and FAO in December 1992, had also determined that the goals of the World Summit were indispensable to the achievement of the goals of that Conference. Another important event during the period under review was the completion of the multi-donor evaluation of UNICEF activities. That report was a very useful one and would enhance the Board's ability to discuss UNICEF activities in a meaningful way.

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15. At its forty-seventh session, the General Assembly had discussed the question of reform of the United Nations and of its operational activities for development. The relevant resolution (47/199) marked a significant advance in that area at a time when the Organization was gearing up to enhance the effectiveness of its contribution in the new era.

16. The principal theme of the State of the World's Children Report was that it was currently within the capacity of the international community to overcome most of the worst aspects of absolute poverty, if it so wished. In that connection, the contribution of the United States to that historic breakthrough could be achieved with its existing ODA allocations, provided that they were restructured to place greater emphasis on priority human needs.

17. On the question of the Fund's income, total income for 1992 was expected to exceed $900 million, which was $74 million more than the medium-term plan projection. A significant part of that increase, however, was due to increased funding for emergencies.

18. On the subject of office accommodation, the Office of Administrative Management had carefully considered the proposals received. The proposal from the city of New Rochelle offered major cost savings, although its location was a disadvantage. For its part, New York City had offered improved terms on the existing lease on UNICEF House, as well as a twin location to house those staff currently located outside of UNICEF House and to provide for future staff increases. The value of those concessions was approximately $90 million, in addition to which the buildings would become the property of UNICEF upon the expiration of the lease. In view of those concessions and the undoubted advantages of the current location, he proposed to recommend to the Board that the Fund should remain in New York City.

19. In recent weeks, UNICEF had lost two major figures who had both made sterling contributions to its work on behalf of children. Ms. Audrey Hepburn, a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador since 1988, had died on 20 January 1993. Shortly before the current meeting, he had been informed that Dr. Okita, the Chairman of the UNICEF Committee in Japan, had also died. He wished to invite the Board to pay tribute to the memory of Ms. Hepburn and Dr. Okita.

20. At the invitation of the Executive Director, the members of the Board observed a minute of silence.

MAJOR ISSUES BEFORE THE 1993 REGULAR SESSION (EB/1993/001 and Add.1)

21. Mr. JOLLY (Deputy Executive Director, Programmes) said that programme-related issues were summarized in document EB/1993/001 and Add.1. The Executive Board would review and consider for approval a total of 24 country programme recommendations with a duration of five years, 6 bridging programmes for two to three years, 5 recommendations for additional funds for current country programmes and 6 stand-alone proposals for supplementary funds. The action of UNICEF was crucial to the success of those country programmes.

(Mr. Jolly)

22. He was pleased to report that, as a follow-up to the World Summit for Children, high-level regional consultations had been held in all regions of the world. In Asia, Latin America and Africa, 90 per cent of children currently lived in countries for which national programmes of action had already been prepared or were currently being drafted.

23. On the question of emergencies, the Board had been requested to prepare a paper on emergency situations and the role of UNICEF in helping to alleviate them. The resulting paper reported on 10 complex emergency situations in which UNICEF was involved. All of those situations had serious implications for UNICEF, which had been drawn into them on a massive scale. During 1992, expenditure on emergencies had been $170 million, or 24 per cent of the total programme budget. The document reported on the collaboration between UNICEF and the newly created Department of Humanitarian Affairs, and raised a number of policy issues which needed to be addressed by the Board. One of those issues was the share of resources that should be allocated to "silent" emergencies in which children died from readily preventable causes, such as diarrhoea, measles, and acute respiratory infections.

24. In response to decision 1992/28, the Executive Director would present a policy paper on the role of UNICEF in family planning to the Executive Board in 1993. The report would discuss the importance of child spacing and responsible planning of family size for the survival and development of children, the well-being of women and the promotion of overall national development. It would argue for an active but culturally sensitive role for UNICEF in promoting family planning, taking into account the previous decisions of the Executive Board, as well as the particular comparative advantages of UNICEF and of the complementary role of other agencies, in particular the United Nations Population Fund and WHO.

25. In 1992, the Executive Board had considered proposals for a more transparent presentation of proposals relating to global funds; in 1993, the Executive Board would be considering a report on their organization and consolidation.

26. He noted that an increase to $15 million a year would be proposed for the Emergency Programme Fund.

27. In the matter of United Nations reform, General Assembly resolution 47/199 had provided a useful framework for UNICEF collaboration with its partners. The Executive Board of UNICEF and the governing bodies of other United Nations agencies had been asked in that resolution to consider its implementation and to submit reports to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. Since it was less than two months since the resolution had been adopted, it was proposed that there should be a very brief preliminary report, with an addendum in late March or early April. In March, there would be a number of critical meetings, notably with the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities), on the implementation of the resolution, so that detailed consideration of a number of issues of concern to UNICEF would have to wait until after those meetings.

28. Mr. ALLEN (United Kingdom) highlighted some of the questions his delegation thought should be considered at the April 1993 session of the Executive Board. With reference to the proposals on children and the environment, if UNICEF was proposing a major extension of activities in that area, his delegation would like to know what other activities would be downgraded to allow such an extension.

29. His delegation was pleased that a paper would be submitted on the harmonization of UNICEF activities with those of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in emergency situations, but would like to see some consideration of the effect of UNICEF emergency work on long-term development.

30. In view of the need for increased aid to human development mentioned in document EB/1993/001, and the fall in non-emergency supplementary funding, he hoped that the Executive Director would outline proposals for reducing budgetary reserves to the approved levels. His delegation looked forward to initiatives regarding family planning and hoped, given the range of views expressed in 1992, that a number of options would be presented to the Executive Board.

31. Global funds had been of great interest to the Board at the last few meetings, and his delegation hoped that the documents and recommendations would include full justification for that programme mechanism as compared to the country programme approach. He emphasized that not just an explanation was required, but a justification of their use. The United Kingdom still needed to be convinced that the use of global funds represented good value for money.

32. Ms. DE BLAUW (United States of America) noted that the General Assembly required agencies to report to the Secretary-General on their specific plans for drug abuse control by 1 March; she wondered how the Executive Board would comply with that requirement.

33. Mr. SIEBER (Switzerland) said that his delegation was looking forward in the coming weeks to the Board's discussion of United Nations reform in the economic and social fields. That discussion would certainly be useful, but his delegation thought that follow-up to General Assembly resolution 47/199 should mainly be done by the Economic and Social Council and ultimately by the General Assembly. Any Executive Board decisions in April 1993 should be taken with caution.

34. Mr. JOLLY (Deputy Executive Director, Programmes) said that a paper on children and the environment would be presented at the April 1993 session. He could assure the representative of the United Kingdom that no major expansion would be proposed in the environmental area. Four or five years earlier, the Executive Board had suggested that UNICEF should be concerned with environmental issues, but had not recommended environmental programmes as such. No major new activities were planned.

(Mr. Jolly)

35. With regard to global funds, he was confident that the concern of the United Kingdom delegation that the recommendations should justify that mechanism would be met. As one of the panoply of tools used by UNICEF to support country actions, global funds had certainly served a purpose. Universal child immunization would never have been achieved in 1990 without the contribution of global funds to country programmes, and he felt that they would again prove invaluable in the broader context of mid-decade and longer-term goals. The headquarters component of global funds represented about 3 per cent of UNICEF programme expenditure, and the element that was supplementary to country programmes accounted for about 9 per cent of the total.

36. On the point raised by the United States delegation, there would be some mention of the drug abuse question in the Executive Director's report. The Executive Board had previously held that the fight against drug abuse should be an element of some country programmes, but not a major element.

37. Several activities were being undertaken as part of the follow-up to resolution 47/199, about which the Swiss delegation was concerned. In particular, the United Nations Development Programme and the Joint Consultative Group on Policy were being consulted on present and future plans for common premises. With regard to the harmonization of programming cycles, in two thirds of the countries where UNICEF conducted programmes jointly with other agencies, such as UNFPA, those projects were on the same cycles. With such agencies as UNHCR, WFP and IFAD, which arranged their programmes by project, the question did not arise. UNICEF and UNFPA had the most serious programme approach of any United Nations agency, and he hoped that they could protect that reputation and build on the decentralization that had developed over the years.

38. The United Nations country strategy was dependent on the interest of the countries concerned. Would they be prepared to work with the United Nations and give it a country strategy role? UNICEF was encouraging them to give a positive response.

39. Ms. SHAM POO (Deputy Executive Director, Operations) briefly described the operational issues set out in paragraphs 64 to 89 of document EB/1993/001. While 1992 had been a landmark year for UNICEF, 1993 was likely to be a very challenging one. Some Governments were having to reduce their contributions to UNICEF, that problem being compounded by the strengthening United States dollar. However, other Governments had pledged increased contributions, which would partially offset those effects. UNICEF expected about the same, or slightly increased, revenues in 1993.

40. Excess current liquidity would be used to maintain programme activities at least at their current levels; as a result, expenditures would exceed income during the 1993-1995 period until reserves were reduced to the 10 per cent level recommended by the Executive Board.

(Ms. Sham Poo)

41. It was difficult to predict the emergency portion of the budget. Emergency funds were likely to drop in relation to 1992. However, emergency funds were expected to be somewhat higher in the 1994-1995 biennium.

42. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) had been extremely helpful, meeting for the express purpose of making a report on important issues before the Executive Board. ACABQ was also to hold a special session on peace-keeping, and had scheduled three days of meetings with the UNICEF secretariat at that time.

43. The increase of $6.3 million in the UNICEF budget for the 1992-1993 biennium mentioned in document EB/1993/001 had since been revised and would now be only $3.9 million higher than the approved figure; $3.4 million of that total had been approved by the Executive Board in 1992 for operations in Central and Eastern Europe, so that the mandatory net increase was only $500,000.

44. UNICEF offices in New York, Copenhagen, Tokyo and Sydney were being downsized, the total of 660 posts being reduced to 627. Despite that net decrease, there had been increases in the emergency, security and internal audit functions. All existing D-1, D-2, L-6 and L-7 posts had been reclassified, with the net result of two fewer posts at the D-1/L-6 level and another two fewer at the D-2/L-7 level.

45. The proposed 1994-1995 budget showed an increase of $50.8 million, or 12.9 per cent, but global inflation of 4 per cent per year had been assumed, so that the non-inflationary factors amounted to only $31.9 million. The non-repetitive added costs included the allocation for changing from Wang computers to a vendor-independent system, and a staffing increase of 11 core posts; other increases amounted to only $3.7 million. The budget documents would be carefully reviewed with Executive Board members. One meeting was scheduled for 17 March, and two others, specifically on the budget and on office accommodation, would be held after the ACABQ report became available.

46. Ms. POULSEN (Denmark) said that the advance copy of the programme and administrative budget had a very comprehensive format in line with the recommendations made by the Reference Group. On the basis of its experience, the Committee on Administration and Finance would examine ways of further refining it to make it user-friendly. In that regard, the secretariat might produce an overview that showed the different budgets of UNICEF. The evaluation of UNICEF contained recommendations concerning the financial accountability of UNICEF, advice on how UNICEF should work out a conceptual definition of administrative costs, and information on what constituted core functions.

47. Ms. MOLSON (Canada) said that the review of the administrative and management structure of UNICEF highlighted the recommendation of the 1992 Board report on the Committee on Administration and Finance. The work of the Reference Group and the evaluation of UNICEF should be reflected in the final proposal.

48. Mrs. CASTRO de BARISH (Costa Rica) said that her delegation welcomed the Executive Director's remarks on the importance the United Nations and the international community attached to the operation in Somalia. Her delegation was pleased to note the follow-up programmes to the World Summit for Children and the meetings that were being held in various parts of the world to implement the strategy and make it possible to execute national programmes. It attached great importance to the Rio programme, which took into account the objectives of the World Summit. It shared the feelings expressed by the Executive Director regarding the loss of two great defenders of the cause of children.

49. Costa Rica hoped that the negotiations with the City of New York would make it possible to keep UNICEF in Manhattan. It was pleased with the efforts to implement General Assembly resolution 47/199. It was in favour of enhanced coordination among various parts of the United Nations system and in particular among the institutions which had activities of direct interest to UNICEF. Duplication must also be avoided, although UNICEF must preserve its unique nature.

50. Ms. SHAM POO (Deputy Executive Director, Operations) said that during the upcoming meetings of the Board, she would discuss with her colleagues the possibility of designing an overview along the lines suggested by the representative of Denmark. The final product would be distributed as a conference room paper or something similar. The Board would have to examine the various budgets. Some of the information was already included in the administrative and programme support budget and many other documents. Financial accountability was an issue that had been discussed internally over the previous year, and the input from the multi-donor evaluation had been very useful. The Reference Group's 1992 definition of core and project costs and some related costs had been an important element in having a much clearer picture. However, UNICEF was still examining the definition to see how it could further refine it. The input from both the multi-donor evaluation and the Reference Group's work would be particularly useful in the proposal for a management study if the Board decided that the study should go ahead.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD FOR PROGRAMME COOPERATION: UNICEF MAURICE PATE AWARD (E/ICEF/1993/P/L.1)

51. The CHAIRMAN said that the Board had before it a recommendation by the Executive Director that the Maurice Pate Award should be granted to the people and state of Ceara, Brazil, and that the Board should approve an allocation of $25,000 from general resources for that purpose.

52. Mr. GRANT (Executive Director) said that the Maurice Pate Award was the highest annual recognition granted by UNICEF. Eleven nominations from all regions of the world had been presented to the Bureau at its meeting in late September 1992. With the endorsement of the Bureau, he had recommended that the UNICEF Maurice Pate Award for 1993 should be given to the people and state of Ceara, Brazil, because they had demonstrated what a very poor region could

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do to help itself even under very adverse circumstances. In 1986, the newly elected Government of Ceara had launched a series of actions to combat childhood diseases and protect children, setting up a system to monitor changes so that progress could be measured and resources targeted to where the need was greatest, and giving priority to providing all families with basic health information. Since existing health services did not have the means to achieve all those goals, the state Government had decided to appeal to non-governmental organizations and the business community. Those efforts had not been derailed by the drought of 1987 and the recession, and their results had been outstanding. Ceara had put into practice the principle of a first-call for children. The Government of Brazil planned to extend the scheme to the nine states of the north-east. It was the first time that the Maurice Pate Award was being granted to South America.

53. The CHAIRMAN said he took it that the Board agreed with the recommendation of the Executive Director.

54. It was so decided.

55. Mr. RIBEIRO (Brazil) thanked the Board for presenting the Maurice Pate Award to the state of Ceara. The work that had been carried out since 1986 in the area of child survival and development was proof that while the goals established at the World Summit for Children might appear ambitious to some people, they could be achieved. His delegation sincerely hoped that the example set by the state of Ceara would give further impetus to programmes for children in Brazil, as well as in other regions of the world.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE 1993 REGULAR SESSION

(a) STATUS OF DOCUMENTS (E/ICEF/1993/INF/1)

(b) BACKGROUND PAPER ON FUTURE WORK AND PROCEDURES OF THE BOARD (E/ICEF/1993/CRP.5)

(c) CHAIRMAN'S PROPOSAL ON BOARD PROCEDURES (E/ICEF/1993/CRP.6)

(d) PROVISIONAL ANNOTATED AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK, EXECUTIVE BOARD SESSION, 26 APRIL-7 MAY 1993 (E/ICEF/1993/1)

(e) THEMES OF INFORMAL MEETINGS (E/ICEF/1993/L.1)

56. Mr. WILLIAMS (Secretary of the Board) said that the documentation process for the regular session of the Board was on schedule. Among the documents that were likely to be late because of inevitable circumstances would be the Executive Director's note on the multi-donor evaluation.

57. Some papers had been combined for ease of reference. The two papers on emergency operations and restructuring had been combined into one paper, and the two papers on global funds and related matters had also been combined into one paper. An additional paper (E/ICEF/1993/CRP.9) provided a breakdown of the documentation for the regular session by type of document, so as to make

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it easier for delegations to analyse the volume of work for the regular session and in particular to address the questions raised regarding Board procedures (E/ICEF/1993/CRP.6).

58. The provisional annotated agenda (E/ICEF/1993/1) was similar to that of the previous year. The Board was entitled to 30 meetings, which had been programmed. No more meetings could be added without formal approval from the United Nations.

59. A paper would be distributed on the informal meetings to be organized with Board members to discuss, inter alia, the multi-donor evaluation.

60. As for the themes of informal meetings, a list of suggested topics could be found in the provisional agenda. In the past, the Board had indicated to the secretariat which of the possible topics deserved priority. However, the situation in 1993 was a little more complicated because, in document E/ICEF/1993/CRP.6, it was suggested that most of those meetings should be devoted to the discussion of regional progress reports.

61. Ms. ROEDSMOEN (Norway) said that over the years, her delegation had urged the Board to strive to reduce the documentation dealt with by the Board. It still held the view that such documentation could and should be considerably reduced. Although her delegation fully supported the Bamako Initiative (document E/ICEF/1993/L.6) and the UNICEF emphasis on Africa, it did not understand the Bureau's decision to request a separate interim progress report on the Bamako Initiative, even though the Board had decided at its 1992 session to defer a decision on such a report until 1994. Her delegation believed that continued emphasis on Africa and the follow-up to the November 1992 Conference of the Organization of African Unity could come under agenda item 5 of the Programme Committee, entitled "Ensuring child survival, protection and development in Africa" (E/ICEF/1993/1).

62. Ms. MOLSON (Canada) referred to the list of informal consultations between the Executive Board and the secretariat for 1993. It would be useful to hold further discussions on the results of the evaluation of both the programme and the administration and finance aspects. She suggested the holding of two sets of informal consultations between the Executive Board and the secretariat, the first on the programming aspect of UNICEF evaluation and the other on the budget and finance aspect.

63. Mr. WILLIAMS (Secretary of the Board) said, in reply to the Norwegian delegation, that the Bureau had considered a long list of requests and attempted to make it coherent; it had significantly reduced the number of documents for the April 1993 session of the Board. As he could not recall the exact details of the document the Norwegian delegation had referred to, he would need time to investigate the matter and report back thereon.

64. The CHAIRMAN said that document E/ICEF/1993/CRP.5 had been prepared by the secretariat to clarify the decisions taken by the Board since 1984 on the

(The Chairman)

subject of future work and procedures of the Board. Document E/ICEF/1993/CRP.6 had been completed after extensive consultations. It represented the feelings expressed by delegations in 1992 on the need to further compress documentation, focus the agenda on policy questions and set a time-frame for addressing very important issues over a period of approximately five years. He suggested that document E/ICEF/1993/CRP.6 should be considered section by section.

65. Miss ERIKSSON (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that the discussion of the Board's working methods should be a continuous process and should not be seen in isolation from the ongoing discussions on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. Accordingly, the Board's deliberations should not preclude any decisions that might result from those broader discussions. On the other hand, the Board must not be prevented from taking decisions of a clearly practical nature that would facilitate its work. In general, the system-wide reform would take precedence over technical decisions concerning the working methods of the Board in its current composition.

66. Her delegation welcomed the suggestions put forward in section 1 of the recommendation by the Chairman (E/ICEF/1993/CRP.6). Since the volume of documentation had grown considerably, delegations should show restraint when asking for additional reports. The secretariat also had an important role in guiding delegations with regard to the overall volume of documentation. The Nordic countries supported the suggestions in section 2 on the agenda. The suggestion to select two major policy issues to be discussed at each regular session was very useful, and it was hoped that agreement could be reached on it. The Nordic countries also welcomed the proposed overview of subjects included in agendas of previous, present and subsequent years.

67. While the Nordic countries supported the general idea set forth in section 3, on executive governance, they would like that idea to be expressed in a more direct way. They would propose an alternative formulation for that paragraph. The discussion of section 4 should be postponed, in view of the need to consider the suggestions on the country programming process in the light of General Assembly resolution 47/199 before taking any decisions. The degree of detail with which the Board handled country programmes was closely linked to the wider issue of governance, and merited further careful consideration. Lastly, the Nordic countries supported section 5, on electronic transfer of documentation, and would welcome any information on the actual state of preparations for implementing the suggestions made.

68. Ms. RONNER (Netherlands) said that her delegation supported the recommendation by the Chairman on the future work and procedures of the Executive Board (E/ICEF/1993/CRP.6). While appreciating the fact that some delegations had difficulties with the way in which the recommendation related to proposals concerning the restructuring of the United Nations, she urged the members of the Board to consider those aspects of the recommendation that could be dealt with promptly, without postponing discussion of them to a later stage.

69. Mr. KABIR (Observer for Bangladesh) said that section 3 of the recommendation by the Chairman should be worded more clearly. His delegation had very serious reservations concerning section 4, on consideration of country programme recommendations, and supported the proposal by Sweden to postpone consideration of that section. Section 5, on electronic transfer of documentation, was acceptable to his country.

70. Mr. JADMANI (Pakistan) said that his delegation also had reservations concerning section 4 of the recommendation by the Chairman, and supported the proposal by Sweden to postpone consideration of it. Section 4 (a) needed a further clarification and should be given in-depth consideration.

71. Miss DIOP (Senegal) said that the recommendation by the Chairman (E/ICEF/1993/CRP.6) was an excellent document, taking account of the concerns expressed by various delegations at previous sessions of the Executive Board. Referring to section 2 (a), she said that limiting the number of major policy issues to two might cause problems. She therefore stressed the need for flexibility. With regard to section 4, on consideration of country programme recommendations, her delegation underscored the need to avoid prejudging the outcome of the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations system in the economic and social fields. Lastly, with respect to section 5, on electronic transfer of documentation, her delegation felt that the situation of the developing countries in that field should be taken into account, and that consideration should be given to the costs to be incurred by the secretariat.

72. Ms. SEMGURUKU (United Republic of Tanzania) said that while her delegation welcomed the suggestion put forward in section 3, on executive governance, there was a need for flexibility in order to be able to deal with changing conditions. With regard to the electronic transfer of documentation, her delegation would appreciate further information on the technical and financial analysis referred to and the way in which the electronic system would be set up.

73. Mr. ALLEN (United Kingdom) said his delegation agreed that there was a need to prepare more focused documentation and concentrate all reporting on issues where action by the Board was required. There was a tendency to produce information papers in the final weeks before the Board's sessions. Requests for such information could be met by papers produced between sessions. In general, his delegation fully supported the biennialization and triennialization of many of the reports considered by the Board.

74. Referring to executive governance, he said his Government fully agreed that the Board should avoid enactment of resolutions that restated policy or were unconnected with UNICEF policies and issues. In general, the Board should not indulge in micro-management. Lastly, his delegation supported the proposal by Sweden to postpone consideration of section 4 of the recommendation of the Chairman.

75. Mr. ADOUKI (Congo), referring to section 1, on documentation, stressed the need for the timely distribution of documents in the official languages, so that all the members of the Board could make use of them when necessary. With regard to the agenda, while he agreed that there was a need to limit the number of policy issues, there should be sufficient flexibility in deciding on the number of issues selected for discussion. His delegation supported the suggestion on electronic transfer of documentation, but stressed the need to further clarify its implications for delegations.

76. Mr. CANTINI (Italy) underscored the need to take full account of the restructuring process of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. The forthcoming resumed session of the General Assembly would continue consideration of a draft resolution that addressed a number of fundamental issues and problems in the economic and social sector. There were important proposals concerning the organizational functions of the operational activities segment, which might be of great interest to the Board. For example, a broad consensus was emerging on the need for the Economic and Social Council to provide general policy guidance to the various programmes and agencies of the United Nations system, particularly in areas of common concern. If the Council was given important governance functions, the Board would have to give that question very careful consideration. If the innovations envisaged under the reform process were approved by the General Assembly, that could have an impact on the Board's structure and functions. Accordingly, while his delegation agreed with some of the suggestions put forward in section 4, it cautioned against prejudging the outcome of the restructuring process under way.

77. Mr. MAYORGA-CORTES (Nicaragua) said that his delegation generally supported the recommendation by the Chairman (E/ICEF/1993/CRP.6), which reflected the main concerns expressed by delegations at previous sessions of the Board. With regard to documentation, he said that more could be done to improve the preparation of executive summaries. Referring to the agenda, he stressed the need for flexibility in limiting the maximum number of policy issues to be discussed. Under certain circumstances, it might be necessary to consider three or four major issues. His delegation agreed with preceding speakers on the need for flexibility concerning executive governance, so as not to limit the possibilities for the implementation of resolutions or decisions. Lastly, with regard to section 4 (c), he felt that further consideration should be given to the possibility of holding more inter-sessional meetings of the Programme Committee. The Bureau could hold consultations on the advantages to be gained from such an approach and the way in which it would be implemented.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.